

including non-Commonwealth countries, which wish to join the traditional Commonwealth country membership.

The organisation is controlled by an Executive Council composed of nominees of the various governments, including one for the United Kingdom Dependent Territories.

P. K. TUBBS
Executive Secretary
March 1986

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 51c OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CODE OF ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE
Z.N.(S.)2474

(see vol. 41, pp. 149–150; vol. 42, pp. 10–12, 209)

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We are in favour of the proposed amendment, chiefly because we believe that the loss of time spent checking names merely to find out whether or not their authors' names should be in parentheses far outweighs the small advantage of knowing that a specific combination is not original while not knowing what was the original combination. The argument that comprehensive lists are or soon will be available in certain groups is as much an argument for the proposal, perhaps even more, than against it.

The fact that a considerable body of literature, including the great *Fliegen der palaearktischen Region* (occupying more than a meter of shelf space), is without the presently required parentheses shows how well they can be dispensed with. Legitimization of such works by abrogation of the requirement for the use of parentheses would not prevent anyone from continuing to use them if he so wished. Abrogation of the requirement would do no harm, but it would make things a little easier and save some time.

The confusing practice of citing subsequent author's names immediately after the species-name is already ruled against in the Examples following Art. 51(b)(i). We therefore recommend complete removal of Art 51(d), including paragraph (i), and the whole of Art. 51(c), but the addition to Art 51(a) of the clause: 'if cited, none other than the name of the original author (authors) may immediately follow the species-group name.'

(2) By C. L. Staines, Jr. (3302 Decker Place, Edgewater, MD 21037, U.S.A.)

Gagné *et al.* have made some good points in their proposal. To an author of both taxonomic and general biology papers there is always the question of whether or not to use parentheses. I am of the opinion that the requirement for parentheses

be dropped for biological or ecological papers but retained for taxonomic ones. This would allow a researcher to trace the nomenclatural status of a species for his literature review.

The only valid alternative that I can see for taxonomists would be to list all the combinations under which a specific name has appeared. This system is followed by some workers but seems even more cumbersome than the present system.

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED COMPLETION OF THE OFFICIAL LIST
ENTRY FOR *RHABDITIS* DUJARDIN, [1855] (NEMATODA). Z.N.(S.)937
(see vol. 42, pp. 197–198)

By W. Grant Inglis (*Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser, GPO Box 1625, Adelaide, South Australia 5001*)

The former Secretary has advanced proposals intended to overcome a problem which I, and others, had thought to have been resolved in 1928 when the name *Rhabditis* was purportedly placed on the Official List of Generic Names by Opinion 104, with *R. terricola* as 'type by subsequent designation' (see Dougherty, E. C. 1955, *J. Helminthol.* vol. 29, pp. 105–152). That not being so, the proposals are acceptable because they do not alter the situation as it is generally understood. Nevertheless, they seem vacuous because they do not (1) alter or protect the status of either the generic or the specific name, nor (2) solve any known, obvious or anticipated problem in nomenclature, because of the provisions of Article 78f(iv).

The proposals refer to Dougherty's brief paper of 1953 (Thapar Commemorative Volume, pp. 69–76) but the justifications for those conclusions are given in a later paper (1955, *J. Helminthol.*, vol. 29, pp. 105–152). In this a very persuasive case is made for treating *R. terricola* as a species of that genus and so, by default, as its type species. This conclusion was reached, and still stands, on the basis of Dujardin's original description so that any reference to *R. aspersa* Bütschli, 1873 is superfluous.

The significant question for the Commission, however, is whether it is necessary to add either name to either Official List. As I read the latest edition of the Code this would give no additional protection to either name, and there is no evidence that either is at risk. The only slight advantage might be to make anyone considering the possibility of changing the generic name to think again, because *Rhabditis* now supplies the root for higher-taxon names up to Class and Subclass.

Note by R. V. Melville (former Secretary)

I am grateful to Dr Inglis for the additional information he has supplied. However, he misunderstands the formal position, which is that the putting into effect of the decision in Opinion 104 on *Rhabditis* and *R. terricola* was postponed in 1958, pending clarification of the taxonomic status of *R. terricola*. My proposals merely aimed to complete this piece of unfinished business before the Commission, and I maintain that this should be done.

Dougherty's 1955 paper shows that Dujardin's original description of the species does not allow it to be identified beyond doubt. It is only as a result of Reiter's work (1928, *Arb. zool. Inst. Univ. Innsbruck*, vol. 3, pp. 93–184) that that description can be used to recognise *R. aspersa* Bütschli as conspecific with *R. terricola* Dujardin, so that reference to the latter still has point.